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ABSTRACT

This study examines the work of the Asia-Pacific Programme of Education for All (APPEAL) since its 1987 inception. Efforts to assess educational achievement at the local, regional, and national levels in Bangladesh are examined with a view to achieving universal primary education; eradicating illiteracy; and providing continuing education in support of the above objectives. Chapters include: (1) "The Present Literacy Situation"; (2) "Towards Education for All"; and (3) "National Policy of Education for All." Statistical data are presented, showing that about 5 million of the 15 million children aged 6-10 years are out-of-school. In all, 74 percent of the country's population is illiterate. The primary strategy to address the program goals is a mass education program conducted by the government in literacy centers and by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) through Mass Education Through Small Local Organizations (METSLO). (EH)

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Asia-Pacific Programme of Education for All

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Preface

The Asia-Pacific Programme of Education for All (APPEAL) was launched on 23 February 1987 from New Delhi, India by the then Director-General of UNESCO.

Through regional co-operation APPEAL aims to facilitate the national efforts of the Member States in Asia and the Pacific with a view to:

a) Achieving universal primary education;

b) Eradicating illiteracy; and

c) Providing continuing education in support of (a) and (b) above.

After the launching of APPEAL, the Member States formed National Co-ordination Mechanisms for APPEAL to mobilize public opinion in favour of literacy programmes, primary education and continuing education, and strengthening those programmes at government as well as non-governmental levels. Many Member States have organized national special events like seminars and workshops to mark the launching of APPEAL in their respective countries. As of December 1989, 20 Member States have formed National Co-ordination Committees for APPEAL or designed existing organizations as National Co-ordination Mechanisms for APPEAL Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Samoa, Thailand and Viet Nam.

In order to assist the Member States to formulate national strategies to implement APPEAL in their countries, the UNESCO Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (PROAP) organized a Regional Workshop for National Co-ordinators of APPEAL in co-operation with the Ministry of Education and Government of Thailand in Chiangmai, Thailand August 1987. This workshop discussed and developed approaches and strategies to implement APPEAL at the regional, national and local levels. It was attended by 31 primary education, literacy, and continuing education experts from 16 Member States in Asia and the Pacific.

Tangible outputs of this regional workshop were national plans of participating countries and a regional plan of action for the implementation of APPEAL, as well as a sincere commitment from the participants of the countries represented to pursue with vigor the implementation of APPEAL.

UNESCO convened the first Meeting for Regional Co-ordination of APPEAL in Bangkok, Thailand, November 1988. Preparatory to this First Meeting for the Regional Co-ordination of APPEAL, UNESCO/PROAP requested the National Co-ordination Committee/Mechanism to conduct a National Study of APPEAL highlighting achievement, problems, policies and plans to achieve the goals of APPEAL.

The National Studies was submitted to the First Meeting for Regional Co-ordination of APPEAL which discussed the issues raised by the national studies and made a number of suggestions to UNESCO and the Member States for the improvement of plans, progress and strategies for achieving the goals of APPEAL.

UNESCO/PROAP is very grateful to the National Co-ordination Committee/Mechanisms for APPEAL and the National Commission for UNESCO in the Member States for providing the national studies and making it available for all people concerned. Unesco also acknowledge the contribution made by individual scholars to prepare the studies.

The national studies provide very valuable information, data and insight of planned and existing programmes in literacy, primary education and continuing education. UNESCO/PROAP is therefore, very happy to publish it and make it available for all interested.

Summary

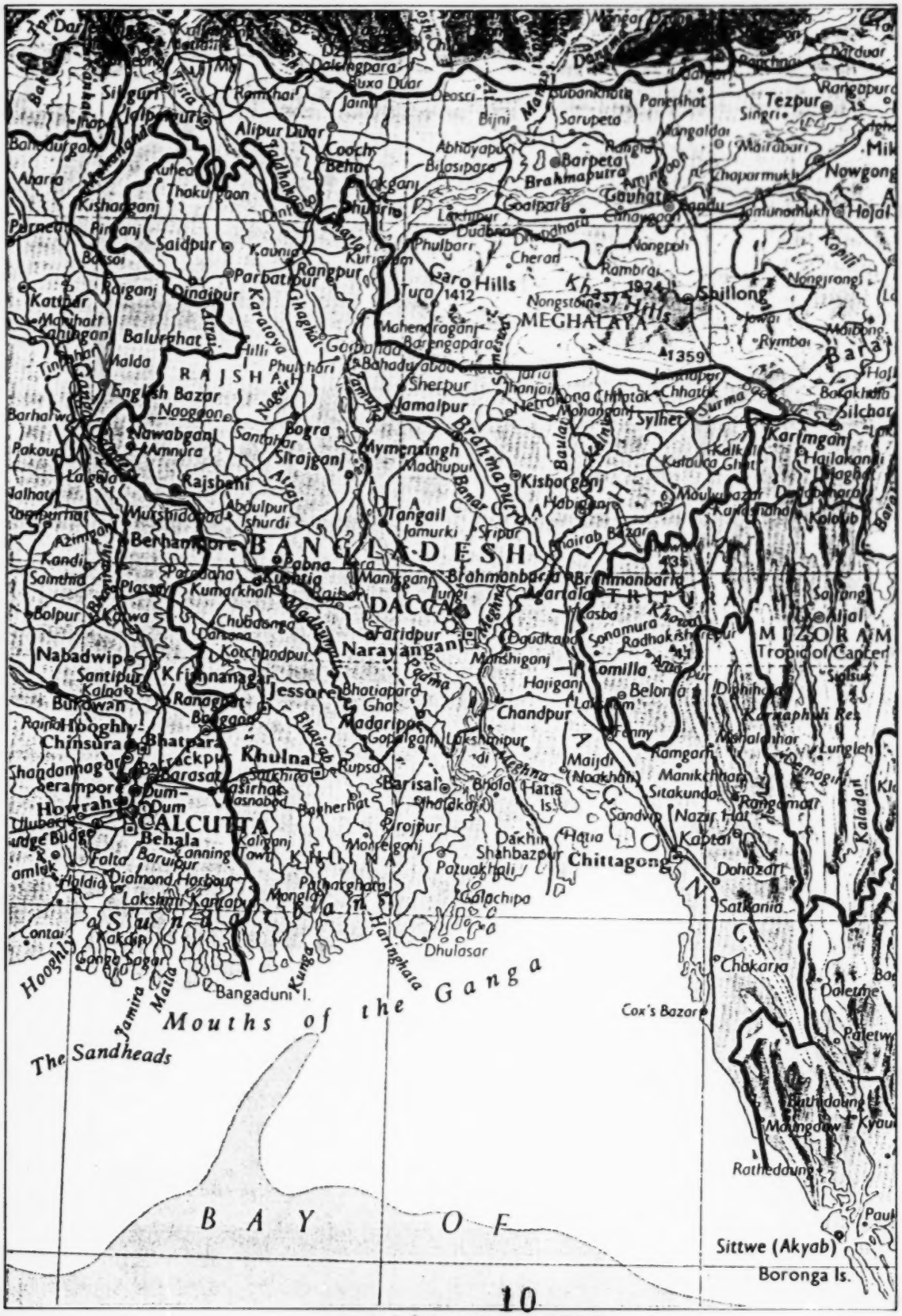
In spite of the overwhelming importance of primary education in national development, the vast majority of the population is deprived of this basic education. About 5 million of the 15 million children aged between 6 and 10 years of age are out-of-school. A significant proportion of older children and young adults also remains out-of-school. In all 74 per cent of the country's population is illiterate. The national goals of development cannot be achieved while the community remains illiterate.

The goal for universalization of primary education (UPE) by the year 2000 is to have 90 per cent of eligible children complete 5 years of primary education. The interim goal for 1990 is to achieve an enrolment rate of over 70 per cent with the majority completing the 5 year primary cycle.

In 1980 a Mass Education Programme was launched with the goal of imparting functional literacy education to 40 million illiterates aged 11 to 45 years. The programme was discontinued later.

During the current Five-Year Plan the government came to the conclusion that UPE alone could not increase the literacy rate. An experimental programme of mass education was launched in January 1988. It is a joint programme conducted by the government and NGOs. The government's role is to make 1.3 million illiterates literate by June 1990 through 27,600 literacy centres. The component of the programme conducted by the NGOs is called Mass Education Through Small Local Organizations (METSLO).

In order to achieve the objectives of APPEAL, the Government of Bangladesh formed a National Committee with the Minister of Education as Chairman and the Education Secretary as Member Secretary. In addition, a coordination Committee was formed with the Education Secretary as Chairman, and the Joint Secretary, Ministry of Education as Member Secretary. Representatives from other concerned Ministries also sit in on the Committee.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Shahbazpur
Pazuakhali
Golachipa
Monglar

Chapter 1

The Present Literacy Situation

Bangladesh came into being as an independent state on the 16th of December, 1971. It is a deltaic region of 144,000 square kilometres formed mainly by the rivers Ganges and Brahmaputra. It is bounded by India on the north, east and west. There is also a small boundary with Burma on the southeast. In the south lies the bay of Bengal and to the northeast lies the broad mass of Assam. The Himalayas are not far from the boundary in the northwest. The total population according to the 1985 statistics is 98.66 million while its present population is estimated to be 110 million with an average annual growth rate of 2.2 per cent.

The projected population for 1990 is 108,346,000 and for 2000 AD is 127,903,000. The average density of population per square kilometre is 672, which makes Bangladesh one of the most densely populated countries in the world. About 85 per cent of the people live in rural areas. The available statistics show that the national literacy rate of Bangladesh is 29.2 per cent of which male literacy is 39.7 per cent and female literacy is only 18 per cent. Life expectancy at birth for males is 47.5 and for females 47 years.

GNP per capita is US$130. Agriculture represents 48 per cent of the GDP, industry 12 per cent. For the past few years Bangladesh has been struggling to achieve self sufficiency in food grain production. Improved weather and a continual drive to increase the area under assured irrigation has increased local food production to about 16 million tons, mainly rice but with a million tones of wheat. At this level, the country still needs more than a million tones of food imports each year. The successive floods in recent years, mainly the devastating flood of 1988, have caused much damage to the production of crops.

Bangladesh inherited a desperate literacy situation when it became independent in December 1971. The census taken in 1974 recorded a 24.27 per cent literacy rate for population aged 5 years and above. The following table gives a break-up of literacy rates for males and females of all age groups by rural and urban areas in 1974.

Table 1 Age Group Literacy in Bangladesh, 1974
(in per cent by sex)

	Sex	Age Group 5-14	15-24	25 and above
	Total	19.9	31.9	20.2
	Male	23.4	40.3	30.4
	Female	16.1	20.6	8.7
Urban				
	Total	33.0	51.90	39.95
	Male	34.87	58.3	50.03
	Female	31.03	43.25	23.52
Rural				
	Total	18.74	29.38	18.25
	Male	22.41	37.86	28.09
	Female	14.76	18.20	7.5

Source: *Census 1974, quote from Shamima Islam's article 'Women's Education in Bangladesh: Needs and Issues' 1982 P. 22 published in "Study of the Literacy Situation, Policy and Plan of Bangladesh", by the Foundation for Research on Planning and Development (FREPD), Bangladesh, October, 83.*

As can be seen in the table below the literacy rate improved from 24.3 per cent in 1974 to about 26.20 per cent of the population aged 5 years and above in 1981.

Table 2 Literacy rate by gender 1974, 1981
(In percentage)

Sex	Year 1974	Year 1981
Both sexes	24.3	26.2
Male	32.9	35.4
Female	14.8	16.4

Source: *Census Report of Bangladesh, 1974 Census Report of Bangladesh 1981 (Quoted from FREPD publication 'A Study of the Literacy Situation, Policy & Plan of Bangladesh,' 1983, p. 37)*

The following table gives the total population aged 5 years and above and the number of illiterates in 1974 and 1981. As shown the number of illiterates has grown annually by 1.11

Table 3 Absolute number of illiterates
(In million)

Year	Population aged 5 +	Illiterates
1974	63.49	48.08
1981	75.80	55.92

Source: *Derived from Bangladesh Census Reports 1974, 1981 (Taken from 'A Study of the Literacy Situation, Policy and Plan of Bangladesh' Published by (FREPD), Bangladesh Oct., 1983)*

million, making the 1.9 per cent gain made in the literacy rate during the period (annual increase of 0.63 million literates) look insignificant.

Using the census reports and available statistics as a basis, it is estimated that there are now over 60 million illiterates in Bangladesh aged 5 years and above. The difference between rural and urban literacy rates was 28.7 per cent in 1961; 23.2 per cent in 1974 and only 14.9 per cent in 1981. The rural/urban difference has since been decreasing in favour of rural areas. While the rural literacy rate increased from 19.4 per cent in 1961 to 24.1 percent in 1981, the urban literacy rate decreased from 48.1 per cent to 39.0 per cent. This is reflected in Table 4. Rural literacy increased while in urban areas both male and female literacy decreased.

Table 4 Literacy rates by sex and residence, 1961 - 1981
(in per cent)

	1961			1974			1981		
	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both
Rural	29.0	9.1	19.4	30.6	13.2	22.2	33.7	14.7	24.1
Urban	59.1	32.1	48.1	54.0	33.8	45.4	49.2	26.8	39.0
All Areas	30.8	10.1	20.9	32.9	14.8	24.3	35.4	16.4	26.2

Source: *a) Country monograph series No. 8 New York, 1981; b) 1974 Census of Bangladesh; c) Statistical Year Book of Bangladesh, 1981; d) Selected findings from 'The National Sample and Vital Registration System of Bangladesh', Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 1983.*

Past Efforts to Raise the Literacy Rate

In this part of the sub-continent which is now Bangladesh, attempts were made as early as 1940 to educate illiterate adults by opening night schools. During the 50s sporadic attempts were made to launch adult education programmes, initially through private efforts. In 1954, The village cooperatives were used as bases for promoting adult education. In 1963 the the literacy drive gained some momentum through its inclusion in the Village Aid Programme.

The village cooperatives were used as bases for promoting adult education. In 1963 the Government of the then East Pakistan created a separate adult education division in the Education Directorate. In 1964, a pilot project for adult education was started and it continued in some selected areas until 1980 when the first major campaign to eradicate illiteracy was undertaken.

A Mass Education Programme was launched in 1980 with the target of imparting functional education to 40 million illiterates aged 11 to 45 years. The programme was to be implemented in two phases. During the first phase, from January to June 1980, about 10 million illiterates from all over the country were to be enrolled and given literacy training. Each of them was to be provided with one primer free of cost. During the second phase, which was to coincide with the Second Five-Year Plan (July 80-June 85), the target was to make 40 million people literate.

In order to implement the programme a Directorate of Primary and Mass Education was established in 1981. The Directorate had a separate wing for implementation of the literacy programme with an adequate number of supporting staff at the various levels of Head Office, District, Thana (now Upazila) and Union. The post of Additional Deputy Commissioner was created at the district level. He was responsible for coordinating the mass education programme in his area. The other distinguishing feature of the programme was that students of classes IX to XII were required to take part in the literacy programme as compulsory curricular activity. The estimated cost of the programme was Tk. 400 million.

In addition to the national programme, a number of voluntary organizations were engaged in adult education activities. But their efforts were largely uncoordinated and did not produce any noticeable impact on the literacy situation of the country.

The national programme was discontinued after two years due to some inherent weaknesses and poor performance as revealed in an evaluative study carried out in 1982. Even the move to involve students in the literacy programme as a part of curricular requirements failed as it was appreciated neither by the parents nor the students.

After a gap of about 5 years, i.e. during the current plan (1985 - 1990), the government felt that UPE could not alone increase the rate of literacy. Keeping this in mind an experimental Mass Education Programme was launched in January 1988 at a cost of Tk. 262.2 million. It is a joint programme conducted by the government and the NGOs. The government's role is to make 1.3 million illiterates literate through 27,600 centres by June, 1990. The part of the programme being executed by the NGOs is called Mass Education Through Small Local Organizations (METSLO).

As an initial step, the government's objectives during the current plan, which will end in June 1990, are:

a. To increase the rate of literacy from its existing level of 30 per cent (11-45 year age group) so that at the end of the perspective plan (2000 AD) Bangladesh can achieve Education for All.

b. To establish a viable institutional/organisational framework for implementation of the literacy programme.

Chapter 2

Towards Education for All

Bangladesh is totally committed to the eradication of illiteracy within the shortest possible time. The initiative for this great endeavour came from the Honourable President in 1984. While inaugurating the national convention on Universalization of Primary Education (UPE), he gave a mandate to the nation to start a countrywide literacy campaign focusing attention on the comparatively younger population of 10 years of age and above. With this presidential mandate an action plan for a national literacy programme was prepared by the Ministry of Education. On the basis of this, action plan guidelines were prepared for the national literacy programme for implementation during the Third Five-Year Plan (1985-1990).

Considering the experiences of the countries which have successfully eradicated illiteracy and the failure of Bangladesh in past ventures, it can be safely said that short term piece meal projects cannot achieve any tangible and desirable result. At present there is a general consensus in the country that the literacy programme should be launched as a national campaign with careful thought and planning. Long term massive government sponsored programmes and sustained efforts are needed and a big push is to be made for intensified endeavour. As such, Bangladesh should take immediate steps to implement recommendation 21 of the Third International Conference on Adult Education held in July-August, 1972. The recommendation runs as follows:

> "Member states in which the illiteracy rate is still very high will launch widescale campaigns for the rapid eradication of illiteracy, mobilizing for this purpose the whole literate section of the population and providing them with suitable methodological guidance and training".

In preparing the next national literacy programme which is to be launched in 1990, care will be taken not to repeat the mistakes and pitfalls of the past programmes which have been identified as:

- Not enough planning and preparation went into the programmes before they were launched. There is a tendency to treat literacy programmes in an amateurish fashion.
- Proper (i.e. technically sound) training was not imparted to the literacy workers.
- Lack of sustained motivation on the part of teachers and learners. Teachers are often found unwilling to work without remuneration. The learners, on the other hand, find the programme uninteresting and irrelevant to their immediate future being.
- Lack of adequate logistical support, like lighting arrangements, black boards and chalks, writing papers and pencils, learning materials and teaching aids.
- Poor management and lack of supervision.
- Lack of coordinated efforts between the government programme and NGO activities in eradicating illiteracy.
- Neglect of post-literacy activities like providing library services for the neo-literates, and absence of the concept of continuing education.
- Inadequate media support.
- Weak monitoring and evaluation system.
- Primers and teaching techniques were not geared to fast learning.
- Failure to utilize existing expertise.
- Lack of enthusiasm of local people when literacy activities are initiated in an area without the proper atmosphere being created beforehand.

In order to attain complete eradication of illiteracy by the year 2000, a comprehensive Five-Year Plan should be embarked upon from 1st January, 1990. The objectives of the plan should be as follows:

- To create awareness that illiteracy is a serious handicap.
- To eradicate illiteracy among children and the youth of the age group 10-30 years within 5 years (1990-95).
- To link the literacy programme with primary education and other socioeconomic developmental activities in the country. Ministries of Social Welfare, Agriculture, Industry, Information and others should be involved in the literacy programme.
- To mobilize all sections of the community for participation in the literacy programme.

Table 5. Official projection of literates up to the year 2000.

Year	Total Projected Population (in thousands)	Projected Literacy Rate (per cent)	No. of literates
1985	98,657	40	39,463
1990	108,026	52	56,174
1995	118,321	65	76,909
2000	127,903	75	95,927

Source: Thoughts about perspective plan. Planning Commission, September 1983.

- To give priority to women and out-of-school youth in the literacy programme.
- To create a climate of favourable public opinion and motivate the educated people to take part in the literacy programme.
- To give special attention to rural areas to bring them up to par with urban areas.

Priority Target Groups for the Literacy Programme

One of the major tasks of a successful literacy programme is the identification of priority groups. In determining the target group consideration must be given to age, professional, geographical location, role in production system, sex, socioeconomic status etc. Consideration must also be given to school drop-out, out-of-school youth and persons relapsing into illiteracy.

On the basis of the above considerations it will be justifiable to include illiterates of the age group 10-30 years as a priority target group for the national literacy programme. This group is composed of fast learners with a lot of motivation. These individuals are already in a position to contribute to socioeconomic development. Women should be treated as a special group and women illiterates should be included in the programme.

Universalization of Primary Education

Nowadays primary education is recognized all over the world as the most important level of education. It is not necessary for everyone to be highly educated but primary education is indispensable for each and every person. Primary education helps a child to develop his personality - moral, mental, physical and social. By acquiring reading and writing capability in the mother tongue, simple arithmetic and familiarity with necessary fundamental knowledge and techniques for good citizenship, a child can learn the proper utilization of his faculties as an individual human being. It is for this reason that primary education has been accepted as a fundamental right of the people and a constitutional obligation of the government.

There is a general agreement that every child must be given primary education for at least five years. In order to achieve this objective all the countries of Asia and the Pacific have attached topmost priority to primary education and Universalization of primary education has thus become the priority goal.

But in spite of the overwhelming importance of primary education in national development, the vast majority of the masses are deprived of this basic education. The situation is alarming in Bangladesh as it is in other countries of the region. About 5 million of the 15 million children aged between 6 and 10 years are out-of-school. Apart from the out-of-school children and dropouts from primary schools, a significant portion of the population, such as young adults, remains out-of-school. All these constitute a vast majority of illiterate masses who comprise about 74 per cent of the total population of the country. It is not desirable to keep such a large section of people in darkness. The national goals of development cannot be achieved while the community remains illiterate.

At the time of independence in 1971, the level of achievement of primary education was not very heartening. The majority of the primary schools were run by the community and lacked the minimum facilities required for schooling. Proper functioning of a primary

school largely depended upon community support. In order to remedy the situation, the government put almost all of the primary schools under government management in 1974 which, in effect, meant that the government undertook to pay teachers' salaries and provide all kinds of school facilities.

Although government participation in primary education brought about a remarkable change in the field of primary education, it has not been possible to achieve the goal of universal primary education in Bangladesh because of low enrolment and low retention. Inadequate education facilities, an inadequate number of teachers, lack of trained and qualified teachers, lack of relevance of the curriculum, and lack of community participation have all combined to keep the literacy rate as low as it is. The following table reveals the present situation in respect of participation at the primary level.

Table 6 Male and Female participation rate at the primary level of education (per cent).

Year	Sex	Primary age group participation rate
1951	Male	48
	Female	13
1961	Male	53
	Female	21
1975	Male	66
	Female	40

Source: Shamima Islam, Women's Education in Bangladesh, Needs and Issues, FREPD, Dhaka, 1982, Table 3, 4 p. 50.

Programme for Attaining Education for All

In order to remedy the aforementioned deficiencies of primary education, the government of Bangladesh undertook a number of corrective measures after independence in 1971 to achieve universal primary education within the shortest possible time.

The first remarkable step was taken in 1973 when the government nationalized almost all the primary schools of the country, thereby taking on responsibility for their management and administration. In 1981, the government decentralized primary education by establishing a separate directorate under the Ministry of Education as the agency for carrying out all the responsibilities related to primary education.

The most revolutionary step that was taken in the domain of primary education was the launching of the ambitious Universal Primary Education Project (UPE) in 1985, which is commonly known as the Second Primary Education Project (SPEP). The project is now being implemented by the Ministry of Education through the directorate of primary

education. About 49 per cent of the total development resources of education have been earmarked for this project. The tenure of the second phase project is five years (1985-90). The specific targets of the project are:

- To increase enrolment from 8.9 million in 1985 to 11.6 million in 1990.
- To decrease dropout remarkably.
- To increase retention.
- To increase enrolment of girls.
- To reduce wastage.
- To improve quality of teaching.
- To bring the rate of rural literacy up to the level of urban literacy.

The main components of the project are:

- Civil Works (physical facilities).
- Furniture.
- Machinery and equipment.
- Transport and vehicles.
- Textbooks and instructional materials.
- Training and orientation.
- Technical assistance.
- Manpower.

The objectives of the projects are:

- To increase primary school enrolment from 60 per cent to over 70 per cent of the 6-10 years age group with a goal to achieve Education for All by 2000.
- To ensure that a great majority of those who enrolled in 1985-90 complete the 5 year primary cycle.
- To improve internal efficiency of the primary school system through better management, supervision and quality of instructions.

The project is being financed jointly by the Government and four International Agencies, viz. IDA, SIDA, UNICEF and UNDP. The IDA is providing assistance as a soft loan while other agencies are providing assistance as grants. The total cost of the project is Tk. 52579.92 lakh.

UPE Goals and Strategies 1990-2000

The goal of Universal Primary Education (UPE) for the year 2000 is to have 90 per cent of eligible children complete 5 years of primary education, acquiring literacy, numeracy and other basic skills. The interim goal for 1990 would be over 70 per cent enrolment and a great majority completing the 5 year cycle of an improved primary education. As a part of the strategy for increasing enrolment and reducing dropout, a number of measures need to be applied:

a. Flexible scheduling of school timing.

b. Introducing liberal inter-class promotions to reduce dropout.

c. Increased community participation for achieving Education for All.

d. Training of teachers and supervisors.

The detailed cost estimates and strategies for achieving Education for All by 2000 AD through UPE, EI and CE are being worked out. The enrolment projections in the primary education system in the country up to the year 2000 are given below in Table 7.

Table 7 Projection of enrolment in primary schools by different grade and sex

Year	Sex	Grade I	Grade II	Grade III	Grade IV	Grade V	Total
1985	Total	5507815	2960944	2359159	1702514	1123189	13653671
	Girls	2621328	1053028	783242	602853	437419	5497780
1990	Total	5555189	3083970	2602785	2114008	1768482	15124434
	Girls	2903696	1166460	867613	667793	484538	609010
1995	Total	5555232	3084132	2603967	2118573	1784040	1514594
	Girls	2907825	1168119	868646	668742	485227	609875
2000	Total	5555232	3084132	2603967	2118571	1784064	1514597
	Girls	2907831	1168121	868848	668743	485226	609876

Sources: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics and Statistical Pocket Book of Bangladesh, 1979, Page 21.

Continuing Education

Continuing education includes post-literacy training for neo-literates and school dropouts to promote retention of literacy skills, continuation of learning beyond elementary literacy and application of this learning for improvement of living conditions.

The concept of continuing education is based on the education dictum that learning is a life-long process. Continuing education centres should be located in a school building, union parishad, upazila parishad, public or private building which can accommodate about 50 persons at a time. It envisages a free approach where learners of different streams such as adult education, non-formal and school education, as well as others in the villages, may avail themselves of the facilities.

In Bangladesh NGOs form a major group working for continuing education for neo-literates. Most of the NGOs have been carrying out their own programmes suited to the needs of local communities and have developed their own primers and follow up materials. There have not been any systematic efforts by the NGOs so far to motivate the neo-literates to retain their literacy skills.

In view of the existing situation in Bangladesh, there is a necessity for an eventual integration of UPE with the literacy programme. The macro-planning for continuing education necessarily recognizes the commonality of objectives and strategies of implementation of non-formal, primary and adult education. A striking feature of the integrated approach is the optimal utilization of infrastructure with minimum financial inputs. The primary school or the continuing education centre should be made the focus of learning activity in the village. It will provide educational opportunity to those who dropout at the primary stage, neo-literates and adult literates.

Programme Activity

Literacy centres will have to be opened to execute the literacy programme and centres will make provision for 30 learners in a 6 month basic course. With a dropout of 10 learners per centre, at least 40 persons will be able to make themselves literate. In order to achieve the target set out, 48,000 centres in the first year, 72,000 centres in the second year, and 120,000 centres in the third, fourth and fifth years would have to be opened. The country's primary schools will be utilized as literacy centres at night.

There should be provision of incentives for the learners. Their effort to become literate should be recognized and they should be given preferential treatment in getting benefits including credit facilities and employment (e.g. food for works and work for food programme) and extension services by different government agencies such as agriculture, health, social welfare etc.

In order to create awareness among all sections of society a motivational campaign should be commence at the outset of the programme with the mass media playing an effective and important role. The campaign should be carried out continuously in a planned manner without any slackening of efforts and wider participation should be secured. Dramatists and writers are to be encouraged to produce drama, features, poems and songs highlighting the curse of illiteracy and emphasizing the importance of literacy.

An appeal should be made to all adult literates in the country to come forward voluntarily to participate in the national literacy campaign. All teachers in educational institutions from the primary stage to university level should be compelled to undertake literacy work at their convenience, preferably during vacations. Special efforts will have to be made to involve the NGOs in implementing the literacy programme. The NGOs will chalk out their own programmes following the general guidelines of the national programme.

Activities of Non-Government Organizations

Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) form a major group working for the eradication of illiteracy in the country. Some of these are managed and sponsored by foreign agencies and the government while others are run entirely on a voluntary basis. However, there are very few NGOs working for literacy development alone as most of the Organizations have varied programmes directed towards the disadvantaged sections of the population for their total development and welfare.

At present there are nearly 8000 non-government voluntary Organizations working for the welfare of disadvantaged populations in Bangladesh. The most confusing aspect of the literacy programme under taken by most of the NGOs is that they seldom specify the level of literacy they propose to achieve. These Organizations have varying objectives so their ultimate goals also vary. They do not follow any uniform method or syllabus and the acquired literacy skill of the target group of a particular programme often differs from that of another programme. To remedy the situation and also to attain cohesion and uniformity, NGOs will have to be given guidelines for achievement of Education for All by the year 2000.

Chapter 3

National Policy of Education for All

In order to achieve the objectives of APPEAL, the Government of Bangladesh formed a National Committee with the Minister for Education as Chairman and the Education Secretary as Member Secretary. In addition, a Coordination Committee has been formed with the Education Secretary as Chairman, and the Joint Secretary, Ministry of Education as Member Secretary. Representatives from other concerned Ministries also sit on the Committee.

National Activities

After the Regional Workshop of the National Coordinators of APPEAL which was held in August, 1987 in Chiang Mai, Thailand, several activities were organized in Bangladesh:

a. During the celebration of International Literacy Day on 8th September, 1987, the Ministry of Education launched its National Literacy Programme in the context of APPEAL. The ceremony was attended by the Minister of Education of Bangladesh and Dr. Makaminan Makagiansar, Assistant Director General of Unesco PROAP, Bangkok and many other important persons.

b. Public functions marking the day were organized by several governmental Organizations. Among the NGOs, the Bangladesh Council for Mass Education organized a countrywide essay competition for students of Grades VI-X, on the subject "How to eradicate illiteracy in a village." In addition, three NGOs working in the field of literacy, adult education and rural development published special issues of their respective journals.

c. The Shawnirvar Bangladesh, one of the leading NGOs, observed the day by freeing some villages from "the curse of the thumb impression."

d. The Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD) was given financial and technical support, through the Bangladesh National Commission for Unesco, to implement an experimental project focusing on the role of village primary schools in the development of rural areas. The project emphasizes the optimization of the participation of local communities and schools in the implementation of development oriented activities.

e. The Bangladesh National Commission for Unesco and PROAP jointly organized five national workshops in Dhaka in the context of APPEAL between 1987 and 1988.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The need for monitoring and evaluation of the programme to achieve Education for All can hardly be overemphasized. Effective and timely monitoring for regular feedback from the activities is necessary for proper implementation of the programme. The monitoring method and tools for EOI, UPE and CE should be designed on a scientific basic and proper utilization should be ensured to achieve the desired results. There should also be provisions for evaluation of the programme at regular time intervals to achieve the goal of Education for All.

Conclusion

The combined efforts of local, national, and international non-government Organizations and the government have yet to achieve the desired result. A determined and big push, therefore, needs to be made on all fronts encompassing UPE, EOI and CE to achieve the United Nations goal of Education for All by the year 2000 AD. Bangladesh faces a major challenge ahead. It has to rouse its people from slumber and awake them to the needs and realities of the 21st century, where illiteracy is a curse and literacy is but a blessing, a sine qua non for changing people's standard of living by equipping them to struggle for economic development and emancipation.

Employing the policies and strategies outlined above, Bangladesh looks forward to a better tomorrow no longer haunted by illiteracy, where its people will make bold strides into the future and play their rightful role in the community of nations. But for Bangladesh to achieve the goal alone will be well nigh impossible. It will need generous help and assistance from bilateral and multi-lateral agencies and friendly countries. It is here that Unesco, as a lead agency of the United Nations in the battle for eradication of illiteracy, will have to play a major role. Bangladesh is confident that its own efforts together with such support, will soon enable it, like other developing nations of the world, to be rid of the curse of illiteracy and make its due contribution to the family of nations.

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